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USAID/CAR Bi-weekly Report

Uzbekistan

USAID Helps a Private Sector NGO to Advance Improvements in Tax Policy

As a major step in building a dialogue between policy makers and the private sector, a USAID-supported the Uzbek Chamber of Tax Consultants held a roundtable discussion on changes in the tax policy. Organized with USAID assistance, the event featured five speakers representing the academic community, the private sector, and government bodies. The participants spoke in favor of improving the tax climate for businesses and making the tax legislation more streamlined and consistent. USAID supports the Chamber of Tax Consultants through the Economic Reform Project, implemented by Bearing Point. The assistance is focused on enhancing the Chamber's ability to analyze policy and offer advice.

USAID Brings Uzbekistan's National Health Care Quality Improvement Strategy Closer to Fruition

To facilitate the development of a national quality improvement strategy, USAID's Primary Health Care Reform Project (ZdravPlus II) organized a workshop for Uzbek health planners and quality improvement advocates in mid-December, also attended by representatives of international donors. A diverse group in national health planners developed a vision of quality health care and identified root-causes of problems of quality of care. The participants resolved to incorporate evidence-based decision making into the policy development process and revise Ministry of Health documents to remove inconsistencies with current clinical practice guidelines. ZdravPlus will continue to guide the working group to ensure that indicators are centered on evidence-based standards and are used to identify areas for improvement, rather than for punishment. The group plans to finalize a policy paper for a national quality improvement strategy by the end of 2006.



*Participants use quality improvement models to guide health planning.
Photo: ZdravPlus*

USAID's project has been assisting in the development of a national framework to bring clinical practices in line with international norms and to develop the Ministry of Health's capacity for producing and revising quality care guidelines since 2000. In 2004, ZdravPlus introduced a proposal for a national quality improvement policy to the Ministry of Health. Because the concept of quality improvement requires fundamental changes in mindset, institutional roles, and the approach to clinical services, it has been slow to take hold at the policy level. The current seminar is the second step toward finalizing the strategy.

Turkmenistan

Professional Health Associations Legalized in Turkmenistan

After three arduous years of lobbying by local activists led by Counterpart Consortium through a USAID grant for the "Health NGOs Capacity Building Initiative", the President of Turkmenistan signed into law Article 63 entitled "About Health Protection of Citizens" in November 2005. The new law states, "The employees of the health care system, in accordance with the Law of Turkmenistan regarding "Professional Associations in Turkmenistan," have the right to organize professional associations on a



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voluntary basis to protect their rights, develop medical and pharmaceutical practices, assist scientific research, and for solving other issues.” This legalization of professional health care associations is a significant achievement in the field of democracy and health care development in Turkmenistan. Historically, the Ministry of Health of Turkmenistan has rejected all registration applications submitted by health care associations. It is anticipated that the newly formed associations will be better able to protect the interests and improve the working conditions of health care professionals in Turkmenistan.

